

# Alverton Infant and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121368
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339925
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 September 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lesley Clark

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	112
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Josh Southwell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs L Gorecki
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Mount Road Northallerton North Yorkshire DL6 1RB
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited six lessons, and held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the chair of governors. They observed the school's work, and a selection of the school's documentation such as the school's development plan, procedures for safeguarding pupils and a range of policies. Inspectors looked at pupils' work in the classroom and the systems the school uses for assessing their achievements and checking their progress. Inspectors also looked at how the school works with parents and outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

- the impact of the job sharing by the headteacher and deputy headteacher on teaching and learning, especially on reading and writing.
- whether the quality of provision and achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage match those in the rest of the school
- why the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who are vulnerable appears to be better than that of other pupils
- the suitability of the curriculum in Year 1.

## Information about the school

Alverton Nursery and Infant school is smaller than average and serves the local housing estates. Ninety seven per cent of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average as is the number who enter or leave the school at times other than the usual. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has a speech and language resource for pre-school children with speech and communication problems. The resource serves the wider health authority district. It offers a mix of 10 part-time places and outreach provision. Children with places in the unit have daily specialist support for two terms in Nursery. The before- and after-school clubs and breakfast provision, run by the governing body, were included in this inspection. The children's centre on site was not subject to this inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a job-share arrangement, supported by an assistant headteacher. There have been several staffing changes in the past two years. One teacher is on a temporary contract in the Early Years Foundation Stage until half term when a newly appointed Early Years Foundation Stage leader is due to start.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

This is a good school and it makes outstanding provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who are vulnerable. The provision for children in the speech and language resource is also outstanding. The school takes excellent care of all its pupils. Safeguarding is first-rate because it is a top priority. Provision in the before- and after-school clubs is good. Teaching quality is good with outstanding practice in the Nursery and Year 2. In these classes, children learn quickly because the provision is extremely well suited to their needs. Provision in the Reception class gives children limited opportunities to think for themselves and lead their own learning and so they make slower progress. The curriculum in Year 1 is a bit too formal at the start of the year for the majority of pupils because they have not yet reached the level expected at the end of the Reception year.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, despite staffing difficulties. It is well led and managed. It evaluates the quality of its work accurately and uses the information well to decide what to do next. It has good capacity to improve. The partnership between the headteacher and deputy headteacher works well. As a result, standards are going up and there is a real buzz and energy in school because of dynamic leadership. Parents think the world of the school and so do the pupils.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more exciting, challenging and purposeful learning opportunities for Reception children both indoors and outdoors by:
  - developing the leadership role in the Early Years Foundation Stage so the Nursery and Reception classes work more closely together
  - increasing the opportunities for children to lead their own learning
  - developing resources to give children more choices and opportunities to find things out for themselves and to solve problems.
- Improve transition from the Reception class to Year 1 by:
  - continuing the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum for those who need it
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to learn actively, including role play, talking and asking questions.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Pupils come happily into school. They are pleased to see their friends and settle quickly

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to work. They behave well because they want to please their teachers and gain stickers for good work. They find lessons interesting and try their best.

Pupils in Year 2 make exceptionally good progress in mathematics. They love the start of mathematics lessons because they really have to have their wits about them remembering to tap their heads and stamp their feet at the right time as they count different numbers. Standards in mathematics are consistently above average at the end of Year 2. Almost all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities reach nationally expected levels, and higher achievers have a firm grasp of negative numbers.

Pupils make good progress in reading and writing. Standards have gone up over the past year because the school has successfully involved many more parents in reading and writing with their children. Standards are now slightly above average for the first time but have yet to be sustained over time. Pupils record what they think of the books they have read, as in this example: 'I liked the Viking Adventure. It was good but a bit scary.' This means that they are beginning to write for a purpose. They also collect 'Wonderful Words' in a special book, to help them with their writing, relishing the new words they pick up such as 'snowdrift' and kilometer. Pupils' progress is slower in Year 1 initially because most find it difficult to concentrate for more than a few minutes because they are not yet ready for formal learning. They try hard but after five or ten minutes at one task they are ready to move on. They make better progress when they talk things over with a partner and move from one activity to another when they need to. They love stories and comment eagerly on the pictures, pointing out, for example, that 'Floppy has snaffled a sandwich'. However, opportunities for pupils to solve problems or use the new words they have learnt in role play are limited. On balance, pupils' achievement is good. Their progress moves from satisfactory at the start of Year 1 to excellent by Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress.

Pupils feel very safe and well cared for. They are very sure that they can go to any adult in school if they need help. They take excellent care of each other. There is no racism or bullying because pupils understand that everyone is different and equally special. Pupils know exactly what they have to do to stay healthy. They know that it is important to exercise regularly. They can list lots of fruits and vegetables that they like eating. They especially enjoyed the responsibility of growing food and talked animatedly about the leeks, potatoes, bulbs and wild flower seeds they planted, explaining that 'plants need bees and bees need nectar'. Pupils bubble with enthusiasm. They clearly have a voice in their school and know that their ideas matter and are taken into consideration. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education because they are self-reliant and have good basic skills.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Most teaching keeps pupils' interest and motivates them to work hard so they learn well. However, the quality does vary from satisfactory to outstanding. This affects the rate at which pupils gain new skills and knowledge. The best teaching is in mathematics in Year 2. This is why standards are consistently good in that subject. Teachers' expert mathematical knowledge and high expectations enthuse pupils and help them to build on what they know and understand at a fast rate. Strengths in teaching include a strong focus on language, finely-tuned work for more able learners and lots of practical activities and opportunities to talk things over. Teachers use assessment well to help them plan what they need to teach next, bearing in mind pupils' individual needs. This is not always the case, though, especially for younger learners and this is why their learning gets off to a slow start in Year 1. Teachers use teaching assistants extremely well to help different groups of pupils to learn, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This has a major impact on their excellent progress.

The curriculum is varied and interesting. Multicultural weeks and different visitors give pupils insight into different cultures. An outstanding feature is the extremely well organised individual programmes of work for a wide range of pupils. As a result, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are vulnerable or those whose development is delayed have the best possible support to help them catch up. However, the transition from an Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum to the National Curriculum at the start of Year 1 is too abrupt for the majority of pupils. The curriculum is enriched through partnerships beyond the school, giving pupils a wide range of sporting opportunities as well as specialist support when they need it.

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The arrangements to care for all pupils are highly effective. This is why those new to the school settle in very well and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress. At the heart of the school's work are its close partnerships with families, children and a range of agencies to sustain the learning, development and well-being of pupils who are vulnerable or face challenging circumstances. Pupils' attendance is checked very carefully. The school has an excellent record of reducing persistent absenteeism swiftly. Every pupil is known well and this is why they and their parents have confidence that the school can help them. This quality of care is mirrored in the before- and after-school clubs where pupils' individual needs and circumstances are taken fully into account so they can integrate happily with others and get the best out of the clubs.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The school leaders work well together to guide the school's improvement, taking decisive action, for example to split the classes in Year 1 to give pupils more individual help. The working partnership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher has a positive impact on teaching and learning. The current focus on improving reading standards through linking reading to writing is proving successful. The school targets different groups of learners successfully. This sharper use of assessment has resulted in improved standards, especially in reading and writing. At the same time, senior leaders check teaching quality carefully and give all staff useful pointers for improvement so there is a common belief that things can always be better. This climate of helpful self-evaluation is a key factor in the school's continued good progress. The school promotes equality of opportunity exceptionally well through its personalised learning programmes and support systems. There is no evidence of discrimination; pupils are happy, curious learners, interested in others and the world around them.

All statutory requirements regarding safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety are rigorously carried out. Risk assessments are thorough and meticulously recorded. The school is extremely proactive in exploiting the skills and knowledge of outside agencies for the benefit of the pupils. The governing body carries out its duties scrupulously to make sure pupils and staff are safe. Governors have a good level of involvement in supporting the school and helping it to tackle weaknesses.

The school has a very good understanding of its community and the families within it. A

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large number of initiatives are in place to integrate families into school life. The before- and after-school clubs make a very positive contribution to community cohesion. Within school, class councils develop pupils' awareness of being part of a community. There are also strong and effective links with communities beyond school such as the adjacent children's centre and local schools. The school rightly says that it could do more to link with communities with different ethnic and socio-economic contexts.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

From well below average starting points, children get off to an excellent start in Nursery and make rapid progress in a short space of time. This is because the teaching is outstanding. Adults take their starting point from the children's own interests. For instance, from children playing at having birthday parties, staff took 'parties' as their theme, developing a wide range of exciting and highly challenging activities. Children mixed jelly and custard, squeezing it through their fingers and scooping it into different vessels while adults prompted them with new words. Children move freely between indoors and outside: both offer equally purposeful and thought-provoking learning opportunities. Children in the speech and language resource benefit from these too, as well as intensive support to help them articulate sounds and begin to use words to communicate. These children make excellent progress because of this expert support and guidance. The picture is more mixed in the Reception class, largely because the three parts of the Early Years Foundation Stage do not work sufficiently closely together. Resources for learning for Reception both inside and outside are more limited. Consequently, adults struggle to make all areas of learning as purposeful and productive



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as they should be and so they tend to over-direct children's learning. This means that children's learning slows down because they have limited opportunities to find things out for themselves and work out the answers to problems. Adults take good care of everyone and keep careful records of children's progress. By the end of the Reception year, children have made good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in their communication skills. Their progress overall is satisfactory with roughly half the children meeting the levels expected for their age..

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Parents think highly of all the school does for their children, especially parents of children in the Nursery and those whose children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents say that the school's commitment 'goes beyond the basic' and that it 'deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour'. The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alverton Infant and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 112 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	89	7	10	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	82	12	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	56	78	16	22	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	75	18	25	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	83	12	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	75	16	22	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	87	8	11	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	52	72	19	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	78	15	21	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	71	19	26	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	56	78	15	21	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	79	14	20	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	64	89	7	10	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



### Inspection of Alverton Nursery and Infant School

Thank you for your warm welcome. I really enjoyed meeting so many of you and watching you work and play. I would like to say a special thank you to the children who spent time talking with me in the afternoon. They certainly showed me that you know a lot about healthy eating and staying safe.

You go to a good school and all the adults take excellent care of you. They make sure that those of you who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have the extra help you need. This is outstanding and helps these children to make excellent progress. You all make good progress because you are well taught and your teachers try to make lessons interesting. Your school is well run and this means that everyone has enough time for each one of you, especially if you have problems. Did you know that your school does really well in mathematics? And now your reading and writing standards are beginning to catch up too. This is because you behave well and work hard.

I noticed that some children find it quite hard to listen and learn, especially those in the Reception class and in Year 1 so this is what I have suggested your school does next.

- The school should help the Nursery and Reception classes to work together so that Reception children have lots of exciting opportunities to learn both inside and outside, doing activities that help them to find things out on their own and to solve problems.
- The school should give children in Year 1 the chance to learn more like Reception children at first, by giving them more times to role-play, talk and ask questions and learn through discovery.

You can help by continuing to work hard and trying to fill those listening pots as quickly as possible!

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